

How Did Alexander the Great Influence Macedonian Culture?

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Abstract: Alexander's empire had a great influence on the later history of Europe. Therefore, this paper hopes to study the culture and policies of other countries in the most glorious period of Alexander's empire, the period of Alexander the Great, to determine whether it really had such a big impact. Alexander the Great exported Macedonian culture including but not limited to architecture, transportation, military ideas, philosophy, and literature. At the same time, he promoted the exchange and integration of various ethnic cultures during his reign. Therefore, we can judge that Alexander's empire had a great influence on the whole of Asia and Europe in every important area of culture, policy and economy. This paper allows the reader to get a clearer picture of where and to what extent Alexander's influence mainly existed.

Keywords: Word History, Alexander empire, Cultural export, philosophy

1. Introduction

The Macedonian Empire was also known as the Alexandrian Empire during the time of Alexander the Great. Early Macedonia was located on the edge of Greece, desolate and underdeveloped, but because of its geographical advantages, it could only develop animal husbandry and agriculture. Philip II became King of Macedon in 359 B.C., and for more than 20 years, his reign brought rapid economic and military development to Macedonia. However, after Alexander became emperor, every aspect of Macedonia was strongly developed, especially in the cultural development. Macedonia's own culture was integrated into the culture of different countries, and the country became richer. After Alexander proclaimed himself emperor, there were many changes in Macedonian culture. From a historical point of view, these changes were both good and bad to all Macedonians and all people from the countries near Macedonia, but there is no denying that Alexander the Great was a great monarch in Macedonian history. During the reign of Alexander, the Macedonian Empire promoted the cultural exchange of neighboring countries in a number of ways. For example, Alexander's eastward expedition promoted cultural exchanges among Macedonians, Persians and Indians and enriched the horizons of the Greek people. And at the same time, it opened the way for trade between East and West. In such exchanges, Alexander transferred his own Macedonian culture to the neighboring countries.

2. Alexander's influence on the Macedonian Empire

2.1. Military concept

After Alexander chose to go to the East, during his reign, he not only put down the anti-Macedonian riots in Greece, but also conquered many eastern countries such as Egypt and Persia, and established a great empire across Asia, Europe and Africa. Prior to this, due to the lack of communication due to geographical relations and the inconvenient means of communication at that time, we can analysis from the phenomenon, the Greek people could not effectively obtain information about other peoples, so the Greek people, including Alexander, believed that their nation was the most powerful nation in the world. We have another reference to prove that, as we know about the wars of Alexander the Great, he spent over years traveling from one place to another. But when Alexander died, it only took a few months to take his body from Asia to Egypt [1]. This really proves Alexander certainly made the traffic faster and smoother. In this great expedition, Alexander showed his excellent military accomplishment, which also reflected the flourishing and advanced military culture of the Macedonian Empire at that time. The Battle of Gaugamela was the second battle fought in October 331 BC between Alexander's Macedonian army and Darius III's Persian army, and failure of this war laid the foundation of the collapse of the Persian Empire with Alexander's successful conquest of the entire Persian Empire. After Darius' defeat in his first battle in November 333 BC, many small cities or tribes west of the Euphrates chose to join Alexander, and Alexander's power expanded rapidly. After his retreat, Darius attempted to make peace with Alexander, making several attempts and increasing what he could offer in an attempt to prevent Alexander from encroachment on his empire, but Alexander refused. Alexander's long delay in moving south along the Mediterranean gave Darius nearly two years to regroup. During this time, Darius forced conscription from all over the empire, and with a plentiful treasury, he continued to recruit soldiers and armed them with stronger weapons, forming a large Persian army. Scholar Hans Delbruck puts the number of Persian cavalry at around 12,000 due to administrative problems. [2] However, due to the Persian leadership's lack of experience leading a large army, divisions within the army and other reasons, most of the forces were lost after the battle, and Alexander gained a slight advantage by better controlling the army. Although Darius's army was numerically superior in the face of battle, Alexander soon discovered tactical loopholes and won the battle. After many defeats, Darius's followers lost their trust in Darius and staged a rebellion while on the run, killing Darius. After that, the satraps of the Persian Empire also surrendered, and the Persian Empire collapsed. [3] In this battle, the military formations invented by Alexander's father and Macedon played a crucial role, and Alexander's proper use of these formations won the battle, showing Alexander's military strength and talent for leading the war. This advanced tactical ideas and military culture originated in Macedonia slowly flowed into Persia and other countries and regions, laying the foundation for the establishment of the empire. When Alexander marched to the East with an army of ten thousand people, the Greeks discovered for the first time the diversity of nations and the developed cultures of many nations. Alexander also realized that he could not only build the empire he wanted by war, but also make different nations live together more peacefully. Alexander planned a large wedding of 300 people that he believed would bring peace and unity between the nations, which became known as the Susa Mass Wedding. Alexander performed this wedding in Susa in 324 BC to promote the union of Macedonians and Persians to union two races into one. He had Macedonian soldiers marry the daughters of Persian nobles, himself had a traditional Persian wedding, and he wore a traditional Persian dress. Not only that, but he also recruited the Persians to his army, which made the Macedonians unhappy, believing that their king was too ingratiating to the Persians, and sowed the seeds of discord between them. At this wedding, Alexander married Darius' daughter, thus claiming to be the rightful heir of Persia, and his marriage to Darius' daughter was not only symbolic, but destined to be the union of two great cultural powers. This

combination had a positive effect on the fusion of Eastern and Western cultures and also stabilized the rule of the empire. [4] However, this wedding made the Macedonians feel that they were no longer needed by their king, so after Alexander's death, they decisively abandoned their Persian wives and broke with Persia, not wanting to have an equal position with the Persians, because the Macedonians at the time had too little knowledge of other cultures. Alexander chose to treat the Persian people in a friendly manner after conquering Persia, but also made the Persians rebel. For the Persians had suffered great losses in the wars brought about by Alexander, and even though Alexander had treated them in a friendly manner, Alexander was still the one who destroyed their country. Their actions led to a rupture of relations between the Macedonian and Persian peoples after Alexander's death, and hastened the dissolution of the empire. From a trade and economic point of view, Alexander built many ports and roads. The Eastern expedition also opened up the traffic between Asia, Africa and Europe, promoted the economic and trade development of various regions of the empire, and strengthened the ties between various ethnic cultures. He also established dozens of Hellenistic cities in the East [5], while preserving the characteristics of each culture, which over the course of history also gradually became commercial centers, attracting people from different cultures of the world, allowing cultures to be more thoroughly integrated within the empire.

2.2. Literature and philosophy

Alexander showed amazing talent in many ways and was able to make decisions far ahead of the people of his time, which would not have been possible without his teacher, Aristotle. Aristotle was a famous ancient Greek philosopher who was a student of Plato and later a teacher of Alexander the Great. Aristotle studied at Plato's Academy in his early years, but left because some of his views disagreed with Plato's. In 342 BC, Aristotle was hired by Alexander's father, King Philip II of Macedon, to become Alexander's teacher. According to the reference [6], Aristotle gave Alexander a good education in morality, politics, and philosophy, and had a great influence on Alexander's thinking. Alexander also gave Aristotle many resources and funds to support his scientific research through royal convenience. Although Aristotle and Alexander's political views did not coincide, Aristotle did not interfere much in Alexander's decisions. [7] Later generations believe that it is precisely because of Aristotle's multi-faceted education of Alexander that Alexander not only ruled the country through violent wars on the road to the East, but also catered to different cultures and pacified the people. [8] At the same time, when Alexander was building his empire, he also placed philosophy in a more important position, by supporting all scholars from different places and using all the theses that his teacher taught him. And he allowed academic development and knowledge to spread, so that the academic aspect of the empire was close to its peak at that time. Alexander's attitude towards knowledge and learning was so clear that he attracted many famous scholars to the Alexandrian Empire, whose influence on scholarship remains profound to this day. We can still see it in different academic parts of nowtime. Because of the integration and exchange of diverse nationalities, art also developed rapidly during the imperial period. The collision of Eastern and Western cultures led to the rapid development of architecture and art, for example, Gandhara culture was born in this period, it is a combination of ancient Indian culture and Greek culture, until now it is still famous in the world. It was Alexander who was influenced by the ideas he had received since childhood, and in the process of governing the country, he better helped cultural exchanges and research on various kinds of knowledge, bringing more opportunities for academic development to the Macedonian Empire.

2.3. Fusion of culture

After the invasion of Alexander the Great, the originally thin Macedonian culture integrated with the cultural characteristics of other countries, forming a preliminary multi-ethnic integration, making the life of the original Macedonian people from single to abundant. Under Alexander, the social system of Macedonian culture gradually became clearer. Alexander and the Macedonian Empire launched military attacks on these Eastern countries, which also led to the partial loss and plunder of Eastern civilization to a certain extent. But through this looting and destruction, these countries and Greece carried out cultural integration and reorganization, so that Greece and these countries have more opportunities for direct communication. In order to ensure the long-term existence of his regime, Alexander tried to promote the cultural integration of the reform, so that Macedonia expanded from a small land into an empire, even though Alexander's empire eventually lasted 13 years before the dissolution, the remaining cultural legacy still proves that he had a huge impact on the entire Macedonian culture.

3. Conclusion

Today, more than 2,300 years later, the cultural legacy of the Macedonian Empire is still the basis for academic research in various fields of the Eurasian continent, as well as in economic trade. The changes caused by Alexander, though political in nature, led in later years to more cultural prosperity. In terms of trade, Alexandria remained Egypt's second largest city and still the largest and most important seaport to this day. Academically, Ptolemy and his son founded the Library of Alexandria, which greatly influenced the innovation of ancient knowledge and formed part of the disciplinary basis for modern knowledge; In terms of art, a large number of ancient Greek buildings left behind let later generations feel the prosperous culture of more than 2,000 years ago, and also provided better research resources for current historians. Alexander's forward-looking political decisions and military conquests contributed not only to the development of Macedonian culture, but also to the Hellenization and rapid development of different aspects of Asian and European culture.

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